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*Parsons Heath C of E
Primary School*

ATTENDANCE

An information leaflet for parents and carers

"Parsons Heath Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards of pupil attainment."

May 2019



What should I do if my child is absent from school?

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given. You are therefore required to contact the school immediately if your child is absent. On their return to school you must then send a note explaining the reason for the absence. If there are existing concerns regarding your child's attendance you may be required to provide medical evidence.

The school office should be informed in writing of absences known in advance such as dental appointments, however please make these appointments outside of school hours where possible. If you wish to request a longer absence – which may or may not be authorised (see overleaf) – please use a Leave of Absence form available from the school office.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Our Attendance Policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively, in line with Government and Local Authority requirements, and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers so that they are aware of their own child's attendance record and the impact that this is having on their education.

The school's Attendance Policy is available from the office or on the school website.

Understanding different types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always

required and it is a legal requirement. Each half-day is known as a 'session'

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons sessions from school for a genuine reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Where attendance concerns have been highlighted, you may be required to provide medical evidence for these absences to be recorded as authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school and the governors, following Government guidelines, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings including penalty notices and/or direct referral to the Magistrates Court.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get registered;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- day trips;
- holidays in term time.

Please see the Attendance Policy for full details of which circumstances will **not** be authorised.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended from 1st September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed, together with the right for parents/carers to apply for up to ten days holiday during term time.

The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

At Parsons Heath Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. It is important for parents/carers to be aware that while decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- during assessment periods in February, May and October. Year One pupils will also need to be in school throughout the period set aside each year by the Government for statutory phonics tests.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.